

ACTIVIST AGENDA

March 2004

March 3rd, Wednesday @ 9:05 pm: IN SEARCH OF 7SECURITY: NATIONAL INSECURITY Since September 11, 2001, western countries have passed laws that promise increased security but may diminish civil rights. This radio programme revisits what has happened in the U.S. and Canada. Location: CBC 740 AM at 9:05 pm. Website: <http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/index.html>

March 4th, Thursday @ 7:00-9:00 pm: Movie and "missile" making night organized by the no BMD committee of Edmonton Coalition against War and Racism (ECAWAR) and sponsored by Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG). Location: International Center, HUB entrance 9101, University of Alberta. Movie: Star Wars Dreams reveals the hopes and illusions of America's continuing search for invulnerability through a missile defense system. It traces the fifty-year history of America's multi-billion dollar Star Wars system from President Eisenhower's Cold War commitment to a defense against the Soviet Union, through President Reagan's obsession with Star Wars, to President George W. Bush's imminent deployment of a "Son of Star" Wars defense against rogue states.

March 6th, Saturday Starting at 8 am to 12:30 pm: EDMONTON TRANSIT SYSTEM 2004 COMMUNITY CONFERENCE. Be part of the future of our transit system. Location: Conference Theatre, Grant McEwan College 10500 - 104 Avenue. Contact: pre-register at 496-1090 etsfeedback@edmonton.ca

March 11th, Thursday @ 7pm: WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF THE CENTRE? meeting Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton (GLCCE) need people to get involved and is holding a general meeting. If you think this resource is important to our community please consider getting involved. Location: Unitarian Church, 12530 - 110th Avenue. Contact: 488-3234 or support@glcce.org or visit www.edmc.net/glcce for more information.

March 11th, Thursday @ 7:00-9:00 pm: Movie and "missile" making night organized by the no BMD committee of Edmonton Coalition against War and Racism (ECAWAR) and sponsored by Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG). Location: International Center, HUB entrance 9101, University of Alberta. Movie: Star Wars: New Hope or Phantom Menace? For 40 years, American scientists have tried - and failed - to build a system to protect the U.S. from long-range missile attack. The recent successful test of a missile interceptor breathed new life into Ronald Reagan's dream of a national shield against enemy missiles. But will building "Star Wars" make us any safer?

March 11th, Thursday @ 7:00-9:00 pm: Deconstructing Supper video and discussion regarding how GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) are entering our food chain and what we can do to avoid this contamination. Presented by BioFreedom Location: International Center, HUB entrance 9101, University of Alberta.

March 13th, Saturday @ TBA: FREE TIBET RALLY. Keep your eyes and ears open for more information about this annual rally to promote freedom for the Tibetan people. It usually starts at Earth's General Store and goes to Gazebo Park (104th Street and 83rd Avenue). Contact 439-8725 for more information.

March 14th, Sunday @ 5:30pm: VEGETARIANS OF ALBERTA MONTHLY POTLUCK SUPPER at Parkallen Community Hall, 11104 - 65 Avenue. \$2 members and \$3 non-members. Please bring a lacto-ovo or vegan dish for six and your cutlery and crockery. Also FREE vegetarian cooking class starting at 4pm prior to the potluck - same place and day. Visit www.telusplanet.net/~voa or call 988-2713 for more information.

March 20th, Saturday - GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION TO END THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ RALLY is being organized to mark the one-year anniversary of the opposition of the invasion of Iraq and to voice opposition to the continued occupation of Iraq by US led military forces. Organized by Edmonton Coalition Against War and Racism. Location: TBA. Visit <http://www.wage-peace.org> for more information or call 988-2713.

March 20th, Saturday 10:00 am - 4:00 pm: BIO-DYNAMIC FARMING AND GARDENING: "THE FIRST ORGANICS WORKSHOP. Bio-Dynamic agriculture has been practiced

worldwide for more than 70 years. It is a natural, simple, non-chemical way of improving soil fertility and plant vitality. This presentation is geared towards Backyard Growers, Farmers, Market Gardeners, Greenhouse Growers, Golf Courses and anyone who uses drip irrigation. Location: Concordia University College (7128 Ada Blvd). Costs: see website or call. Contact: Don at 780-905-8123 (after 6pm PLEASE). Website: www.voicesofthesoil.org

March 20th, Saturday: Garden Institute's 9th Annual SEEDY SATURDAY is Edmonton's paramount spring gathering. Showcasing seeds, heirloom varieties, workshops and information sessions, displays and much more. Location: Concordia University College 7128 Ada Blvd (2 blocks S of 112 Ave. on 73rd Street) Contact: 468-2796 or email info@mkids.com. Website: <http://www.mkids.com/Garden/default.htm>

March 20th, Saturday Doors @ 8 pm: Second Annual ONE WORLD BEAT MUSIC FESTIVAL will showcase several great bands and other entertainment. This festival is happening in conjunction with the Global Day of Action to End the Occupation in Iraq. LOCATION: Fiddler's Roost, 8906 99 Street. ADMISSION: \$10 sliding scale (no one turned away for lack of funds). For more information contact Lynette at 434-9236 espa2002@shaw.ca. All proceeds of this event donated to Iraqi Adopt-A-Town Project & Keep A Child Alive (HIV/AIDS relief organization).

March 22nd, Monday: 11TH ANNUAL WORLD WATER DAY FOR 2004 focuses on the theme: Water and Disasters. Do your part and work to reduce your personal pressure on the world's water resources by actively reducing the amount of water you use in your daily life. Next to air water is our most basic need. Website: <http://www.worldwaterday.org>

March 23rd, Tuesday: FUNDRAISING CONCERT with Maria Dunn, Guy Smith and guests. Come and enjoy music and friends and support Iraqi Adopt-A-Town Project. Location: Sidetrack Café 10333 - 112th Street. Contact: 474-3869.

March 23rd, Tuesday @ 7 pm: GROUND SOURCE HEAT PUMPS presentation by Brian Park. Location: Room 5-142(1st floor of the 105th Street Building) Grant MacEwan Downtown Campus on 104th Avenue. Visit www.ecn.ab.ca/sesci/ for more information.

March 26th, Friday @ 7 pm to 9 pm & Saturday the 27th @ 9 am to 4 pm: STRENGTHENING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS workshops by the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation. Learn how to develop a board that works in a healthy and supporting manner with staff and volunteers, legal obligations of directors, organisational skills, etc. Coffee and lunch will be provided. Location: City Arts Centre (10943-84 Ave). Cost: \$10.00 per person, payable at the door. Contact: 469-6088 acgc@web.ca www.web.ca/acgc

March 27th, Saturday @ 10:00- 5:00 pm: ASAC BIRTH/BABY FAIR Location: Queen Alexandra Hall 10425 University Avenue (one block west of Calgary Southbound and one block south of 76th Avenue). Contact: 720-2828 mcniven@telusplanet.net. Website: <http://www.asac.ab.ca/>

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
FOOD NOT BOMBS NEEDS VOLUNTEERS TO HELP FEED THE HUNGRY
Please come help out any Saturday. Meet at 10 am at Boyle Street Coop 10116 - 105th Avenue. Food serving starts around 1:00 pm.

TAKE ACTION
Participate in the monthly Campaign Earth! @ <http://www.campaignearth.org/>

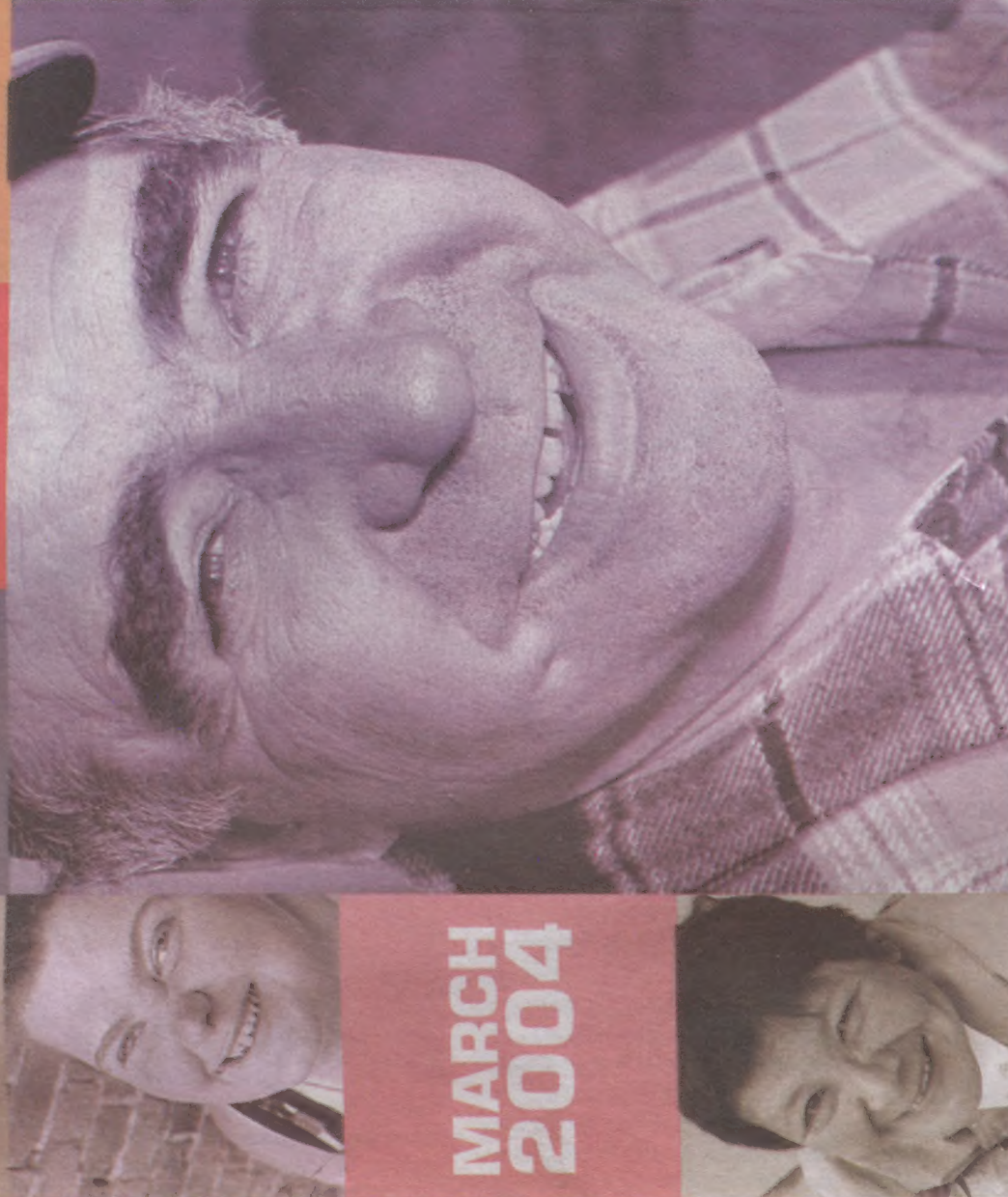
Reduce Pesticide Use in Edmonton. Phone your councillor or the Citizen Action Centre at 496-8200 and let them know what you think about the continued use of pesticides our school playgrounds, parks, and sports fields.

Send a message to our Canadian Government regarding the National Missile Defence Programme by phoning 1-800-622-6232, contact your Member of Parliament (<http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/people/house/postalcode.asp>) and/or sign the petition at <http://www.cease-fire.ca/>

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has" - Margaret Mead

If you know of an upcoming activist event that should be listed here please email Michael at egs@interbaun.com or Earth's General Store 439-8725.

OUR VOICE



MARCH 2004

Focus: Health

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OUR VOICE is published to provide an income opportunity for economically marginalized people in our society while communicating their issues to the public.

OUR VOICE is a NON-PROFIT program that survives on vendors, advertising contributions and Tax Deductible Donations.

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**MARCH 2004
VOL. 11 NO. 03**

OUR VOICE invites your contributions and input.

Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, unless otherwise indicated.

OUR VOICE welcomes written submissions (particularly those on PC compatible diskettes), cartoons, photographs or artwork.

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Opinions expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of OUR VOICE, the editors or publishers.

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THE WORD

A Healthier Balance

It has always been a simple matter to access information about how to develop and sustain a healthy lifestyle, how to reduce stress and how to comport yourself as a decent human being and good community member. It is a fairly recent phenomena that well-being has become a growth industry, perhaps eventually overwhelming the endless and often dangerous diet book industry.

Diet books and their degree of popularity are based upon our guilt for bingeing during the holidays and other "occasions." Things like diet books represent our half-assed attempt at confronting our questionable habits. It is possible that, finally, enough people have tried and failed at enough ill-conceived diets that the quick fix trend has been spotted. People may be figuring out that a treat is not a treat if you are having it for breakfast, you are simply eating donuts as a meal.

Like most things, your general well-being depends on achieving balance in every aspect of your life. On paper, everything is going swimmingly for us as a species. We can scan our blood and tissues and nip some life-threatening diseases in the bud; therapeutic-cloning (not human-reproductive cloning) could prove to transform medicine as we know it; we live longer than our parents; and babies have a much higher survival rate than they did previously. On the other hand, we work more hours than we used to; we have more people in each household working just to stay afloat and we are, on average, stressed enough to ensure that our brains and nervous systems will be irreparably fried years before

our bodies have been unplugged from life supports.

The well-being industry has reached a high level of popularity just in time. Although we are intentionally doing worse things to our bodies than ever before; we are also gaining a collective understanding that something needs to be done to counter skyrocketing occurrences of cancers and other dread diseases. I do not wish to assign any undue validity to new diet schemes that have the latest wellness jargon attached to them; and I am also not suggesting that every person with a family conflict should volunteer to be subjected to a correct, yet abusive tongue-lashing by Dr. Phil.

The paradigm shift here is the dawning recognition that quick fixes do not work and it's the lifestyle as a whole that needs to be addressed. This is important because it is the way we need to look at our society for our species to survive. It is a challenge in Edmonton to keep all our citizens from freezing to death during the winter by finding them a safe, warm place to stay. Can you imagine wanting to put others out in the cold because you don't want "them" staying overnight somewhere in your neighbourhood? Crazy as it may sound, these opinions were voiced at a South-side Edmonton church at a recent meeting concerning homelessness issues. A society that is not interdependent is not a society at all. When we do not look after everyone in our society or when we allow those in poor countries to starve and/or die of AIDS, we are no longer really thinking in terms of community and we cease to be civilized.

Former BC Premier Mike Harcourt has been persuaded by Paul Martin to



chair a high-powered advisory committee on Urban Issues which will give its ideas to a special cabinet committee on cities. Will this, in practical terms, address issues of homelessness; what people need to live a healthy life; low-income housing; urban violence and drug abuse; and all the other trials and tribulations that inner-city people face? It can and it should, but we will have to wait and see. A lot of people living outside in the cold will also have to wait and see.

Can you achieve balance and a sense of well-being if your spouse suffers from depression, if your child is sick or if your neighbours are in some kind of trouble? No, but you should also not wait for a perfect world before

you allow yourself to be happy.

What is the answer to living this balanced, healthy lifestyle? You probably already know everything that you should be doing and the things you should avoid or do in moderation. There are no big secrets here with the exception that you must come to terms with the fact that things in your everyday life cause you stress and they must be addressed sooner than later.

Excluding any addictions you may have, think about what you need, what you merely want and if your wants conflict with the needs of those around you. An honest appraisal of what is a need and what is a desire can be a significant eye-opener. Achieving balance and general well-being is a lifetime journey that is not the product of reading a self-help book, doing a few push-ups or taking multivitamins. It is a matter of honestly measuring how you feel and how you combat stress in your life.

Remember, your crappy mood impacts a lot of people. Venting on someone may feel good at the time, but the side effects are more long lasting and far reaching than you probably realize. A walk around the block is by far the better option. Take care of yourself, your friends and your family. You are an important part of your community, just as everyone is essential to making up the community as a whole.

Do something for yourself that reduces stress. Go to your local recreation centre, put on the most unsightly swimming togs imaginable and spend half an hour in a Jacuzzi. Then, shower, dry off and do something equally soothing for someone else. That, my friends, is a good first step on the road to balance and good health.

- Warren Bjarnason

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Book of Days: This Month in History



MARCH 9

Conrad Russell to his sister Diana, 1932

As to parents, some do and some don't try and teach manners. I think many are glad for an excuse not to have to say anything in the nature of criticism or a reprimand. Of course it is only shirking something. Sir John Horner used to say: 'Shake hands, Katharine, shake hands', to his daughter [Katharine Asquith] after she was forty if visitors came into the room. He also never lit a cigarette in his own room without saying to me first, 'Do you mind if I smoke?'

...Right up to 1914 it was utterly impossible for two young people to dine at a restaurant together. When Raymond [Asquith] and Katharine were engaged they used to have breakfast together at an ABC shop. Except both going to the same ball there was no other way of meeting - at least there would have been the risk of being seen. That's twenty-five years ago. Times have changed.

MARCH 21

The Earl of Winchilsea, 'a man of frank, kindly, and generous character, but not wise', became convinced in 1829 that the Duke of Wellington was a dangerous subversive. In its obituary of one of his successors in the title, the Daily Telegraph sets out the consequences of this conviction.

When the Duke, as Prime Minister, was attempting to carry Catholic Emancipation, Lord Winchilsea wrote to the press accusing him of planning to introduce popery into every department of state.

The Duke issued a challenge, and there followed a meeting with pistols at dawn in Battersea. Winchilsea was late, which tested the Duke's patience. 'Now then, Hardinge,' he ordered the second, 'look sharp and step out the ground. I have no time to waste. Damn it! Don't stick him up so near the ditch. If I hit him he will tumble in.'

When the order came to fire, Winchilsea, unwilling so stain his hands with the blood of the national hero, pointed his pistol at the ground. The Duke aimed to hit him in the leg, but succeeded only in peppering his coat, whereupon Winchilsea fired in the air. His second then proffered a written apology.

After some discussion the Duke accepted this, and departed with a curt bow. That night he mentioned to King George IV that he had been fighting a duel; the king somewhat unconvincingly replied he would have done exactly the same thing himself.

MARCH 23

Mahatma Gandhi, at his trial on a charge of sedition, 1922.

Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is the last article of my faith. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered has done an irreparable harm to my country or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips. I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it; and I am therefore, here, to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen.

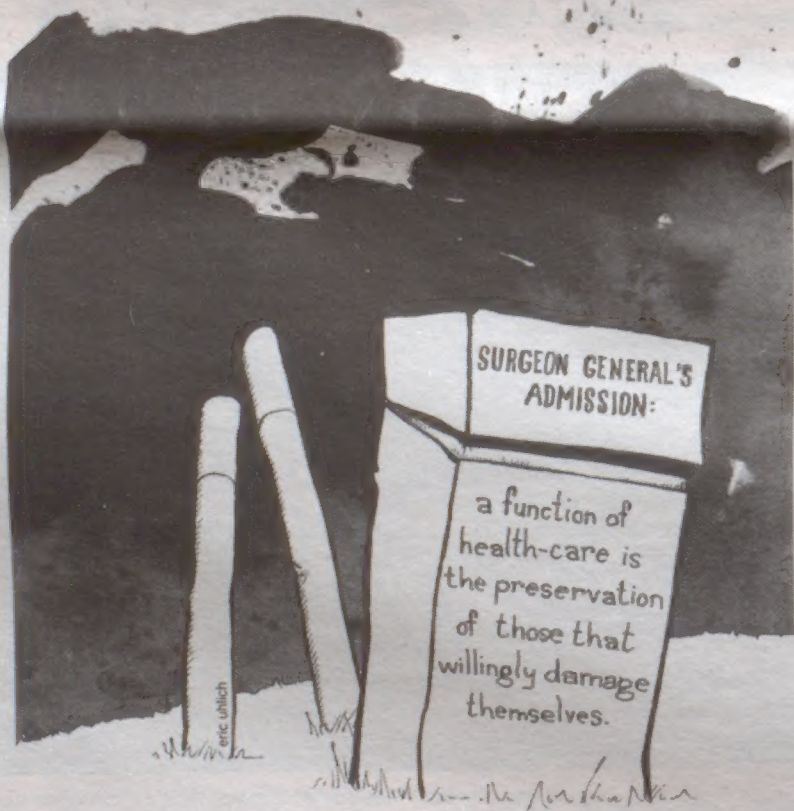
WORD **W**

WORD: Faculty of speech; locution, talk, parlance, verbal intercourse, prolation [archaic], oral communication, word of mouth, parole, palaver, prattle.

ROGET'S THESAURUS

Advertise to Edmonton

If you have a business or service and would like to reach an educated, socially-conscious segment of Edmonton, try advertising in *Our Voice*. Call Ron at 423-2285 ext. 139 to discuss our reasonable rates.



Replacements Available for Our Voice 2004 Calendar

Please note that the months of June, November & December of the *Our Voice Urban Exposure* Calendar contain printing errors.

Replacement calendars are now available from *Our Voice*.

For more information, please contact Ron at: 423-2285 Ext. 139.

We apologize for the inconvenience.

Our Voice's Ten-Year Anniversary

Our Voice is coming up on its Tenth birthday in April. Like most lucky ten-year-olds, *Our Voice* is going to have a party to commemorate its big day.

Join us at the Sidetrack Café, 10333 - 112th Street on the evening of April 1st for a night of great local bands, special guests and door prizes.

See you there!

THE VERDICT

On Film Monster

V VERDICT

Decision, determination, finding, **verdict**, sentence, decree; opinion (belief); good judgment (wisdom)

ROGET'S THESAURUS

During a nine-month period, in 1989 and 1990, Aileen "Lee" Wuornos murdered seven men who had picked her up while she was prostituting on Florida highways. The movie *Monster* is a study of her life and an attempt to understand how she became the most notorious female "serial killer" in America. As gripping as the movie is, especially the astonishing performance by Charlize Theron, more interesting is separating the movie characters from their real life personalities.

"Wuornos's father, Leo Dale Pittman, was a child molester and a sociopath who hanged himself in prison in 1969. Her mother, Diane Wuornos, married Pittman when she was 15 and bore him two children. She divorced Pittman less than two years into the marriage, a few months before Aileen was born. Diane found the responsibilities of single motherhood unbearable and in 1960 she abandoned Aileen and her brother Keith, who were then adopted by their maternal grandparents. Aileen was pregnant at age 14 and sent to an unwed mothers' home for the duration of her pregnancy. The staff found her hostile, uncooperative, and unable to get along with her peers. She delivered a baby boy, who was put up for adoption, in January 1971. In the same year, Aileen, known to friends as Lee, dropped out of school, left home and took up hitchhiking and prostitution. She drifted to Florida and embarked on a decade of failed relationships and small-time crime—forgery, theft, and an armed robbery that put her in prison for a spell. From time to time she turned tricks, but even as an exit-to-exit interstate prostitute she was not a hot commodity. When she met 24-year-old Tyria Moore ("Selby" in the movie) at a Daytona gay bar in 1986, Lee was lonely and angry and ready for something new."

- Marlee McLeod

Here is where the story begins in real time but first there is a disturbing montage of her young life and hopes. She is small child, dressing up in front of the mirror and the voice-over of an adult Lee tells us of her dreams of fame and a wealthy, happy life. A male arm reaches in and yanks her away violently. Then we see her reading with a black eye, falling into the dream world she described as her only solace. Fast forward to her adolescence. She is trying to be pleasing to boys, to have them think she's special and lures them the only way she knows how. She is exposing her breasts to them for money and your heart winces as she tries to smile pleasingly at the last boy to leave. She then graduates to turning real tricks. One of the movie's saddest images (and there are so many) is the adolescent Lee being shoved out of a car in some desolate woods by a "john" she thought actually liked her. She is chasing the car, screaming and enraged, while

the man looks with pure disgust in the rearview mirror. This is a defining moment, the recurring theme in her life—the spit on her mouth as she shrieks obscenities will be covered by the dust of people rejecting and running away from her. When she meets Selby (Christina Ricci) in a gay bar she entered only to get drunk in, we watch as these two lonely misfits begin to bond in a mutual hope for something real and lasting. Selby seems as sweet as an ice cream sundae and her huge eyes gaze up at the strapping, manish Lee with admiration and awe. Charlize Theron has amazing body consciousness in this role; she's puffed up, preening like a peacock and has a repertoire of masculine twitches and postures that now place her in a whole other

league of actress. She's protective and gushingly generous with "her girl" and seems to be embodying the type of male she always wanted to believe existed. When Selby decides to live with Lee, there's an understanding that Lee will be the provider. Soon though, the cash flow begins to grow tricky and Selby starts to become more ice than cream. In a series of heart wrenching scenes, we watch Lee try to clean up, go straight and get a real job. Because she's so under qualified and has a criminal record, we see door after door cruelly slammed in her face. Lee tries to explain her plans to Selby, but all Selby knows is that she's hungry and bored. She doesn't understand why Lee suddenly wants to quit "hooking" and looks disappointed and put upon. But the audience



knows why—she has murdered one of her "johns". Richard Mallory was her first "victim" but, if the movie is even a fragment of reality, her killing him was pure self-defense. This episode contains the most horrific scene of sexual torture I've ever seen and I'll never attend another movie that promises anything of the same. When Lee finally pries her hands loose from the car door she's tied to and finds her gun, I'm ashamed of the thrill seeing her shoot that bastard afforded me. Now she has much more cash than she expected and a car. When she reads in the paper that there are no leads in Mallory's murder, she sees a way of making much more money than hooking and keeping Selby happy. Selby begins to devolve more and more into a shallow, self-absorbed leech, the irony being that Selby's family kept shrieking that a woman like Lee obviously wanted to take advantage of her. That Selby grew to mean so much to Lee was tragic and touching.

"The real driving force in Lee's life wasn't sex; it was a search for an emotional bond and love. Love that she'd never really had—from her abandoning mother, her emotionally and physically abusive grandfather or, it seems, from the grandmother who failed to protect her from him. Certainly not from the callous young males who had sex with her while she was an adolescent. Lee found the deep emotional bond she desperately craved with Selby. Her borderline personality disorder carried with it an overwhelming fear of abandonment."

I scrutinized closely the violent year during which Lee snuffed out seven lives while writing my book, *Lethal Intent*. At least six of the seven murder dates matched times when she felt under heightened threat of losing Selby. That desperate fear might well have been the trigger to rob and kill—what some profilers call the precipitating factor."

- Sue Russell

I'm not sure that the movie conveys Wuornos's anger well enough or the way people were so repelled by it. The more one reads, the more clearly you see a bitter, volatile person who appalled and frightened people and drove everyone close to her away. "I'm one who seriously hates human life and would kill again," she wrote in a letter to the Florida Supreme Court. She was put to death by lethal injection on October 9, 2002, what she had always wanted so that she could "make good with God".

This movie certainly drives home the horrific lives of hookers. Aileen Wuornos is treated like a piece of meat and it's almost understandable that she could be so callous about shooting the creepy "johns" who kept her thinking that way. Another thing it drives home is the dearth of options for women who want to quit this life. Without choices, there can be no hope.

Though well done, this is a brutal movie and you have to be prepared for that. It's very interesting but the price you pay to see that much ugliness may not be worth it.

-Keyna Laurence

THE RHUBARB



A Kind Deed...

Many, many life years earlier. I'd left a small community fleeing from drugs, abuse and worse. Thinking I could make a clean break from the death and destruction all around me. I called ahead to let my father know I would be arriving in this urban city; he was the only one I knew. The only one left to help me escape my old world. The only person I saw as a lifeline. He informed me that he would not be there for me when I arrived not to call him, no one would answer. His then current girlfriend then gave him an ultimatum, he was to either pick her or his daughter to be in his life. He made his choice. Although I was forewarned of his decision the desperation of leaving gave no relief. To my mind it was stay and die or to leave and live. I boarded an airplane bound for Edmonton, Alberta. I couldn't help but think that he would not turn away from his flesh and blood, that he would cave and let me into his life once more. These thoughts were the only thoughts I had while looking out the small window in this huge plane. Polite conversation with the men sitting next to me was the only distraction I had. They were drinking and laughing, the world seemed so grand for them. The normal question had followed: where were you from? Where were you going? Who was going to meet you at the airport? I smiled and gave them the answers they were looking for. The answers I was hoping for.

The plane landed. The pilot made his announcements; he was wishing us well and telling us of the weather conditions. A winter storm was brewing. I made my polite good byes to the men who were sitting next to me picked up my carry on and left. My first objective was to retrieve my luggage and to make that phone call. Here I am in an international airport in a city that could swallow you whole.

As far as I was concerned I could have been in the middle of the desert. I knew no one. Not a soul. The phone rang, rang and rang. I could feel the knot in my stomach getting tighter. I hung up; maybe I called the wrong number? He wouldn't? Would he? I dialed again. Still there was no answer. My stomach was not so good. I needed to sit down. What to do? It's been a 10 hr trip and it's almost midnight. These seats are pretty stiff; I don't think I can sleep on them. The airport security will probably kick me out I thought. I'm sure there was a vacant look upon my face when I heard a voice, a somewhat familiar voice. "Do you need a lift?" Looking up I saw an older man his hair was graying it was one of the men sitting in the seat next to me on the airplane. "Sure!" I replied.

His limousine pulled up. The driver got out and put our bags into the back of the car. He was so polite and respectful he opened the door for me I got in and away we went into the city lights. He asked me where I was going? What to say? I decided to tell my story. You see I have nothing to lose. Afterwards a long dead silence. The silence became so loud it could break ice. I said "you can drop me off anywhere." "I'm ok." He looked at me. His smiling face became quite sober. "Let me tell you some thing at one time in my life I was where you are. A stranger helped me out but I had to promise to repay that deed to the person who helped me by helping another in the same situation and here you are."

My mind was racing. What does he mean? Is he being sincere? Or is he trying to trick me to go with him? He could see that I was being cautious, my reply was not quick. A grin came back to his sober face and his eyes brightened once more. "I'm serious. This is what I will do for you. I will put you into a hotel for three nights at my cost; after that you are on your own. However, you must repay your debt to me by helping another in your lifetime with a good deed."

To this day I will never forget this stranger. I can't remember his name and vaguely remember his face. I can only remember his big heart.

- Valerie Fine

AUDIENCE AWARD FOR WORLD CINEMA
SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

A Special Premiere Screening
in support of Edmonton's Our Voice Magazine.

Wed. March 17, 2004 - 7:00pm

Tickets: \$9 adults / \$7 students-youth / \$6 kids-seniors



"Essential!"

Cameron Bailey, NOW Magazine



"Highly-effective,
wonderfully entertaining..."

Katherine Monk, Vancouver Sun



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A film by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott & Joel Bakan

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8712 - 109 Street - Infoline: 433-0728

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A Feature documentary by
Mark Achbar, Jennifer
Abbott & Joel Bakan.

Wed, March 17, 2004 -
7:00 p.m. @The Garneau
Theatre 8712 - 109 Street

Infoline: 433-0728 (or) 474-
6859 / 995-6819

Tickets:
\$9 adults /
\$7 students-youth /
\$6 kids-seniors

A special premiere
screening in support of
Edmonton's **Our Voice**
Magazine.

Sponsored by:
The Community Networks
Group (474-6058 / 995-6819)

THE CORPORATION

engages us in a darkly
amusing account of the
institution's birth as a legal
"person" whose prime
directive is to produce ever-
increasing profit for its
shareholders regardless of
the cost to anyone, or any-
thing else. This pathological
nature wasn't always writ-
ten in stone. 150 years ago
a corporation was merely
an organized way of doing
business. Today it is a glob-
al power.

The Corporation features
interviews with CEO's and
top-level executives
representing a wide range
of industries, including: oil
(Shell), pharmaceuticals
(Pfizer), computers (IBM),
tires (Goodyear), carpets
(Interface), public relations
(Burson Marsteller),
branding (Landor), and
advertising (Initiative) as
well as critical thinkers such
as: Noam Chomsky, Peter
Drucker, Milton Friedman,
Naomi Klein, Mark
Kingwell, Vandana Shiva,
and muckraking filmmaker
Michael Moore.

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THE RHUBARB



R RHUBARB

I want a dish to taste good, rather than to have been seethed in pig's milk and served wrapped in a **rhubarb** leaf with grated thistle root.

KINGSLEY AMIS

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Andy

I'm at the warehouse. Sixty of us a night. Fifty min. So I don't have a regular address. If you don't have an address, you can't get a decent job. And if you lie, they find out. So you're screwed if you lie and you're screwed if you tell the truth. Welfare's got my check and won't give it to me. I worked all my life. Twenty-two years at one place. I've got \$1,100 a month to pay in maintenance, and when they hear about that they won't hire you. They don't want to be bothered with the deduction from your check. Or they say, "Oh, so you're one of those deadbeats that doesn't want to take care of his family." I've been out of work for eighteen months now.

How do I keep my sanity? I look at someone worse off than me. That's what you gotta do. Find someone worse off than you and think how lucky you are. I helped out some native woman in a wheelchair in the snow, and I feel good about that.

Ann

I'm on a medical disability. Exercise? I'll be carrying the groceries home tonight. I don't have a car. You learn the value of potatoes, and rice, and 3 noodle packages for \$1. A lot of people around here live on those. The food guide is out the window.

Food and housing are always a problem. The fridge or the stove doesn't work, or you've got one with one burner. I don't, but a lot of us stay at hotels in a room, and they don't have a fridge or even a hotplate. What kind of food guide can they follow? And if there's mental illness...if you're schizophrenic...it's worse. I've got a friend. He's lost a lot of weight.

Two years ago it started. Memories. I was sexually abused. Post-traumatic stress and memories coming back. I have a good therapist and they're giving me enough time.

Health and well-being? Getting out of bed. Eating something even if you don't feel like it. Physically? Walking is good. Like, it's not a question of signing up for an aerobics class.

December, January, February...there's less people around and about because their health's suffering from the fact they can't get out.

On the street, you have to take care of yourself first. A person with an addiction has got to help themselves first. Nobody can get you out of bed but yourself. You've got to play tough love with yourself. Sounds weird, but it's necessary.

I can't work now. I was in a car accident and I have back problems. I've got no family to turn to. That's where the sexual abuse was.

It's easier for guys to live around here. Guys outnumber women two to one, so you have to be careful. You have to be smart.

Hope? I believe in God. He takes me wherever I am. He knows my situation. It's day by day. And I read a lot. I have an unquenchable curiosity. History gives me hope. There was a battle in the war and the Germans were gassing the Canadians pretty good. So their commander told them to piss in a napkin and hold that to their nose, and it worked and they outflanked the Germans. The Canadians made out. So you don't ever know. You don't give up the battle. You've got to keep going. It took spirit to overcome apartheid in South Africa. It's never really over. Every month is a new food buying experience.

Health and well-being. We don't ever talk among ourselves about an issue like that. We just get through the day. So what did you hear from the others?

Four Inner-City Interviews

I talked to a number of street people one day, people on AISH and other forms of social assistance. The question I asked them was:

What does keeping up your mental and physical health mean to you living on a limited income?

How do you do it?

Bruce

Get me a bike and I'm happy. I can get around and get things done. That's summer. Winter...I got two legs. I walk over to Kingsway mall; then, up to Northgate. In winter, when the weather's not too cold, walking can be easier than in summer in the heat. Your feet can blister up bad.

I'm no couch potato like a lot of people with a steady job, which I can't get. I've had serious brain surgery and I have a growth on the opposite side from the surgery. I get dizzy. Heights. I've got three tickets. I mean qualifications, and I can't use any of them.

I've been on the Capital Region housing list for four years now, but nothing ever becomes available. But I've got my little place where nobody knows I'm there, but now it's too cold. It's inside the city limits

but if I got cold and dropped crossing the field, I'm dead, so I had to come in here. I'm at the warehouse the city set up for the cold weather. It's close by. First time I've ever been in the Bissell. I don't like to ask anybody for anything. It's hard on self-esteem, but sometimes you have to.

Mental health? Plans for the future? The future is tomorrow. Every day's a new day. You have to stay positive.

If the rents came down a bit, I'd have a chance. The damage deposit's a killer. There's not enough in an AISH check for a damage deposit and the rent. Add in food at the same time, plus getting utilities hooked-up.

I play bingo a bit. Me and my friend. She helps me. I can't always figure it out. If we win we split. We won once and I bought a brand new bike. I haven't had a new bike since I was seven years old.

Later on, I'll mosey on down to the library.

Herb

Everything's laid out right in front of you on the street. You don't cross anybody because you'll be seeing them again soon.

I was married. Wife and I had two good jobs. We had a little girl. I still see her just about every day. She's nine-and-a-half now.

I can get 75% off at the Kinsmen and the other city fitness places. It's a special offer for people with low incomes. I'm send-

ing my application in today. I'll have to go downtown. There's no mail boxes around here.

Around here there's violence, even at imagined slights...not a lot, but you have to be careful. Everybody's kind of afraid. Moving around...well...it's more than just getting from Safeway to the car.

I had a job for ten years loading trucks and the wife had an even better one. She's remarried now and we get along better than when we were married. New husband seems a bit threatened though. Hell, I wish them both the best of luck.

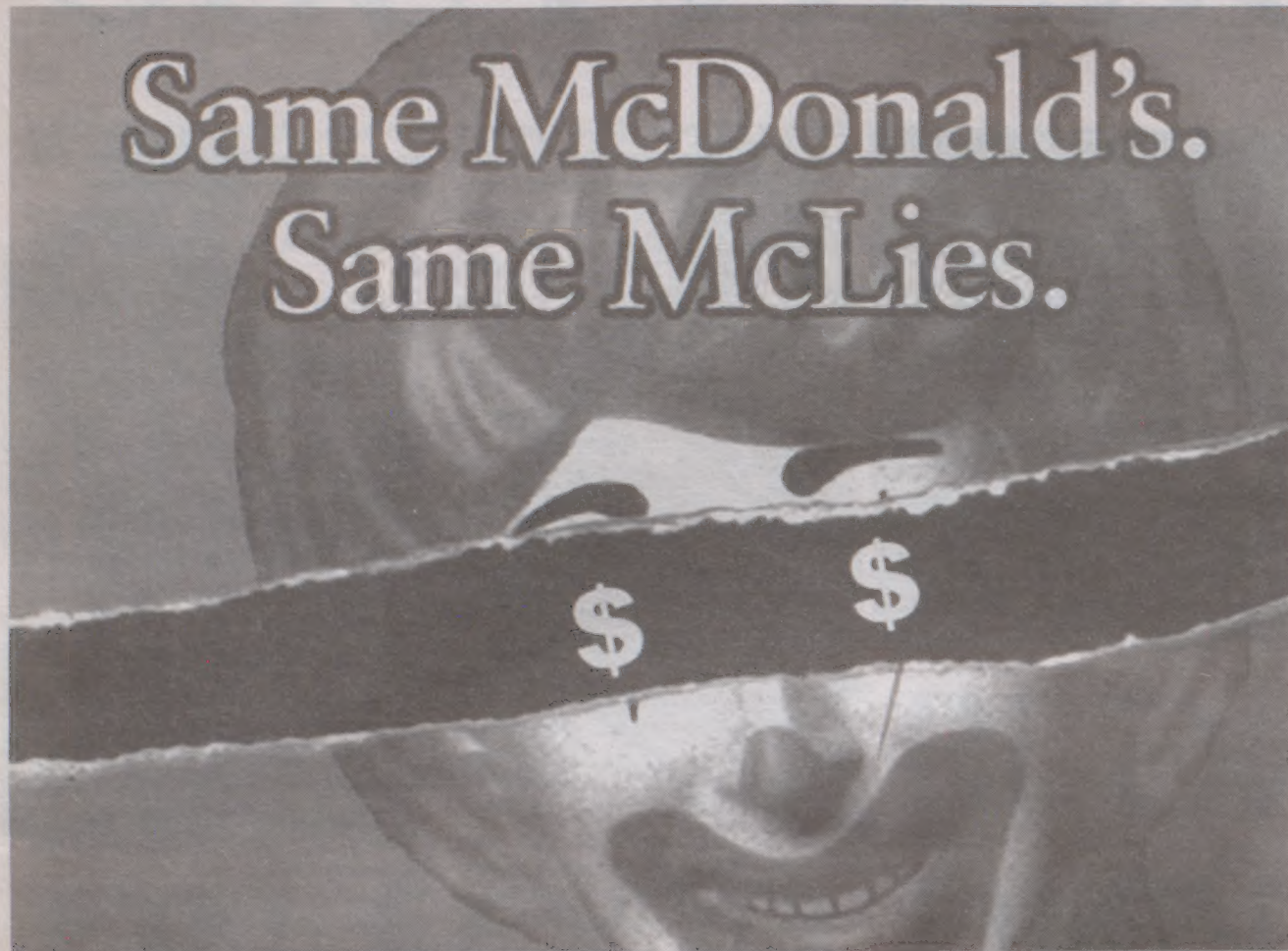
I got a place in this neighbourhood, but I need a place with one bedroom so things would be better when my daughter came to visit me.

How can you have mental health or self-esteem when you're waiting in a hallway for them to kick you out in the morning? I lived at one place where that was my job. Maybe it was cold and you had to put someone out, and you didn't know if they'd wind up dead in a snow bank. I hated that.

I'm on social assistance. Just paying for food and shelter, it's tough. I don't drink...hardly at all, but if you do, or you're on drugs, you can put away the cards. You're not going to make it.

THE RHUBARB

Same McDonald's.
Same McLies.



McHigh-Speed & McUnhealthy

The number of critical accusations made against McDonald's nearly reaches its own boastful 'customers served' claim: billions and billions. This is, of course, not without a touch of hyperbole, but McDonald's has been condemned for a multitude of offenses over the years; starting with the McLibel trial of the mid-nineties in which the burger mcBaron was raked over the truth coals for a couple of years in court, to Morgan Spurlock's recent documentary film, "Supersize me," that sees the hasty deterioration of the filmmaker's body on a one-month, all-McDonald's McDiet. But why does the restaurant super-chain receive such constant negative attention? Perhaps it stems from McDonald's attempt to cover the globe in the gentle curves and soft glow of the golden-arches, perhaps it's their manipulation of children with advertising, or maybe it's that lard-eating clown, Ronald. These are all very reasonable allegations and are reason enough to be upset by the McChicken-pox spread since 1967 of over 1300 burger joints in Canadian communities. But there's one other possibility: McDonald's service is just too fast. They are too efficient. They make feeding too easy. And the potential of fast-food, despite even the health-risks, seems far too attractive to pass up.

With thousands of McDonald's fast-food 'restaurants' feeding Millions of Canadians every day, a strong compulsion arises demanding that the well-being of our society be disputed. Speed of service has become the principle of good service. But the real nature of speed is haste, which has simply become the alleviation of one layer of stress. This layer of stress, in particular, being the sometimes-necessary-always-a-nuisance act of feeding oneself. In a given day, one might work eight hours or more; there might be kids that need rides, attention, care, even love, and don't forget all the great television programming that must be watched. With all the rudiments of

Perhaps it stems from McDonald's attempt to cover the globe in the gentle curves and soft glow of the golden-arches, perhaps it's their manipulation of children with advertising, or maybe it's that lard-eating clown, Ronald.

modern life demanding attention, it's no wonder fast-food is such an attractive option; three square meals a day can take a lot of time, and McDonald's is so cheap, and the kids love it: they have such finicky tastes.

The art of feeding oneself is not as simple as eating. There are complex concerns of taste, health, quality of food, cost, and of course, time. But the consequences of exchanging a square meal that might be unpopular with the kids and hitting-the-drive-through-to-grab-a-bite can be easily ignored in the moment. A delicious McDonald's big mac, with its special sauce oozing between fingers, and saturated golden fries can be tolerated every now and again, but the long-term effects can be devastating. Spurlock's film will illustrate the negative impact of fast-food on the body better than can be done here; but the point is, eating can easily become the stress that gets mediated and reduced to fast-food. Missing work to prepare a full meal, or skipping the kid's soccer practice for dinner might not be an option, but to indulge at the local McDonald's won't hurt.

As a society, we are quite possibly too stuck in the moment. The state of our natural environment gets ignored because in the present, the internal combustion engine works just fine thank-you-very-much; we cut spending to education and health care because the long-term effects are ignored, and we eat poor quality, unhealthy food because, at this moment, it probably won't stop my heart. The fact is, however, our society is inundated with evangelizing dictates of consumer convenience and haste, and with our busy lives, how can we afford not to drive-thru? Do we have the choice to work less, or to slow down our lives? It seems doubtful, and until we take control of our own choices, we will continue to be what we eat: high-speed and unhealthy.

-Eric Uhlich

On One who died
discovering her
Kindness

Some vex their souls
with jealous pain,
While others sigh for
cold disdain:
Love's various slaves
we daily see
Yet happy all com-
pared with me!

Of all mankind I
loved the best
A nymph so far
above the rest
That we outshined
the Blest above;
In beauty she, as I in
love.

And therefore They,
who could not bear
To be outdone by
mortals here,
Among themselves
have placed her
now,
And left me
wretched here
below.

All other fate I could
have borne,
And even endured
her very scorn;
But oh! thus all at
once to find
That dread account-
both dead and kind!
What heart can
hold? If yet I live,
'Tis but to show how
much I grieve.

- John Sheffield

RHUBARB R

RHUBARB: A discussion, often heated, in which a difference of opinion is expressed:

Altercation, argument, bicker, clash, contention, controversy, debate, difficulty, disagreement, dispute, fight, polemic, quarrel, run-in, spat, squabble, tiff.

ROGET'S THESAURUS

THE RHUBARB

R RHUBARB

What **rhubarb**, senna, or
what purgative drug
Would scour these English
hence?

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



SEEING IS BELIEVING

Standing on the corner of Washington Street and Cattano Avenue in Morristown, New Jersey, Ginger Bennett and Payton, her golden retriever, prepare to cross the street. Bennett firmly calls out the command: "Forward!" and follows Payton onto the road, completely unaware that a large four-door van is about to cut right in front of her.

But Payton halts. And the jolt of her harness signals Bennett to step back onto the curb. As the van rolls to a stop, the driver lowers his window, congratulates the pair on passing Seeing Eye's final exam and then speeds down the road to test another blind student.

Morristown is a living, breathing classroom and home to Seeing Eye, the oldest dog guide training school in North America. This year, the school is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Over the years instructors have matched more than 13,000 specially bred dogs with blind Canadians and Americans, but only after canines have passed the same "intelligent disobedience exam" that Payton aced last year when she stopped Bennett from oncoming traffic.

Disability rights activists have hailed the multimillion-dollar facility as a safe

haven for students who must attend intensive four-week classes and live on campus while they train dogs to safely navigate through Morristown's streets, bus terminals, businesses and restaurants. Yet, this picturesque scene of training cute pooches and of equal opportunities inside the classroom is clouded by the fact that students still encounter everyday challenges and discrimination that can't or won't be replicated on campus.

This contrast between life within the gates of Seeing Eye and what Bennett calls "the outside world" is sharply real for students. What's more, Bennett adds, well-intentioned sighted people are often less helpful and more of a hindrance when they offer unsolicited assistance. "Sometimes people interfere and it's hard to be thankful when they want to help you but they aren't really helping," says Bennett, who is currently completing an internship at Seeing Eye. "It's a nice gesture," she quickly adds, "because a lot of people ignore us but it's still interference."

"Interference" from the general public remains the most serious threat to the safety of those who are blind, confirms Mike Artis, one of Seeing Eye's instructors. Whereas students never command another student's dog, sighted people regularly call out to the animal, pet it and feed it

thereby distracting the dog and putting a student in danger. Michele Drolet, who relies on a German shepherd guide named Angel, is a counselor for students who find it hard adjusting to Seeing Eye's rigorous program. She says she hates it when "concerned people stop us from crossing the street because they're not sure if we're safe. Grabbing my arm or stopping us from crossing the street would be like me grabbing the steering wheel when you're driving a car."

Drolet exudes confidence in both speech and action; her firm handshake, her hurried pace when she walks with Angel and her slick skills on cross-country skis. Back when Drolet was a child, before going blind, she used to downhill ski near her Connecticut home. She decided to take up cross-country skiing after losing her vision completely, and trained on trails she couldn't even see, until one day she decided to try out for the 1994 Paralympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway. She glided to a bronze medal finish that year and became the first American female athlete (disabled or able bodied) to win an Olympic medal in cross-country skiing.

Michael Moran, another Seeing Eye alumnus, currently meets with blind New Yorkers interested in enrolling at the school. He relies on his buddy Kurt, his fifth German shepherd that he's trained to date. Visually, the two are well matched: Moran is slouched deep in the soft cushions of a plush armchair, while Kurt is comfortably stretched out on the floor with his head lazily resting on his front paws.

Moran and Ginger Bennett, both Seeing Eye alumni and close friends, joke about their respective "systems" of Braille labels, tags and the shortage of each in their homes. "I'm bad at being blind!" says Moran. "I'll walk in a room, put something down, and forget where I put it a few minutes later. I'm terrible! I know where food and clothing is, but that's it."

"I know!" Bennett chimes. "One thing I wish for is that you could be blessed with organizational skills when you're blind." She thinks aloud for a moment about how she should clip her house keys to Payton's collar because she's always losing them at least that way she could hear them jingle.

During a tidy week, Bennett keeps her shoes on different shelves, where each level represents a certain color; her clothing is stacked in Braille-labeled drawers. Fingering the black-and-white-checked polyester blazer that she's currently wearing, Bennett explains, "Sometimes I can feel the clothing and I know what it is."

But that's only because I'm probably more organized about my clothes than most of my other stuff in my house."

"After a while though, you get tired of thinking about this all the time," Moran says.

Bennett simply nods her head in agreement, remaining silent.

Although these daily adjustments remain a reminder that both friends will always be blind, Moran says he embraced his disability years ago. Today, he simply focuses on recruiting new students to the program, eagerly awaiting Seeing Eye's 75th anniversary gala dinner, which will be held in May at the school's massive dining hall.

But students never seem to get a break. Even the dining hall is an extension of Seeing Eye's classrooms. In fact, it has intentionally been set up to replicate the atmosphere of a public restaurant, where students are encouraged to navigate around other diners before sitting down to eat. They also practice the art of "tucking" their dogs under the table when meals are served.

Seated at the hall's tables today are a random mix of Seeing Eye students, alumni, instructors and administrative staff, each of whom are real-life players in an interactive exam. As Moran sits down to his baked ziti and salad, Kurt politely assumes his position under the table; there's no begging or whining as Seeing Eye dogs are given special meals that are individually proportioned by kennel staff early each day. Moran is easily the most popular person at the table as he effortlessly cracks joke after joke until a familiar voice, Michelle Drolet's, playfully calls his humor "crass" and asks him to pass the salt. Moran reaches for the condiments just beyond his plate and casually feels for the small, stout salt-shaker (the tall, lean one is full of pepper). He then hands it to Drolet, who's seated next to him with Angel nestled by her feet.

Bennett, who is seated at the table directly behind Moran and Drolet, finishes her lunch first and prepares to head back to work. She calls out the command: "Forward!" But Payton refuses to move. A waitress, oblivious to the pair, is standing in the way and carefully balancing an armful of plates. No one congratulates the duo on a job well done this time, since both have already graduated from Seeing Eye. But Bennett verbally praises Payton anyway and smiles, knowing that at times perhaps the world inside Seeing Eye isn't so different from the one out there.

-Neil Parmar



SCUTTLEBUTT



ON FOOD & PHONES

Feeding the Poor

Warmer temperatures have contributed to a relaxed atmosphere in the basement of the Bissell Centre (10527 - 96 Street), where dozens of people show up for snacks at 10:30 every morning. Some visitors have taken their jackets off, and the air is thick with conversations of every kind. At this time of day, the Centre is frequented by the working poor, some of whom have been left homeless by rising rent and utility costs. A few have learned all the soup kitchens by heart and make use of them when necessary, but for others, the snacks offered here are the only food they will see all day.

After pushing into a throng of people comprised mostly of men but dotted with women and a few toddlers, I approach my first interviewee - a man made bulky by his

layered clothing - and ask how he eats. "Soup kitchens" he replies shortly. When invited to expand on this, he and his friend - neither of whom gives a name - start talking quickly about panhandling for food money. It seems to be a point of sensitivity, even among people in soup lines, that some of them must beg to eat. After I sit down to write a few notes, a knowledgeable employee points out another man in line for food. I ask the same question, and he answers, "Soup Kitchens." Brusque. A few more questions and the conversation opens up, with a couple of the other guys in line chiming in on the intricacies of street dining. "Beans," one says. "And doughnuts," says another. It takes my brain a few seconds to process that last one: "Doughnuts?"

A kitchen helper tells me that doughnuts are a staple for some of those banned from the soup kitchens. After being kicked out of multiple kitchens for violating the rules, such as the one barring people from using drugs or alcohol on the property, those who sleep in shelters may instead come to rely on the sugary confections offered there. That kind of diet is not healthy for anyone, but to natives - who have a greater susceptibility to

Diabetes - it is a total disaster. And it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep people like these from falling through the cracks.

In 2000, the Edmonton Homelessness Count Committee conducted a survey that found over 1100 people in this city lacked permanent shelter. Two years later, when they counted the population again, there were over 1900 people either living in the shelter system or, in over 60% of the cases, right on the streets. 267 of those, many of them absolutely homeless, were children. In addition to those consumers, people more from among the sheltered poor also use soup kitchens or the services of the Edmonton Food Bank. The growing strain on these institutions necessitates a certain amount of inflexibility in how things are done: Meal times are fixed, for example, and latecomers are usually out of luck unless they can provide proof of a compelling reason for their absence.

A random poll from among the half-dozen soup kitchens serving the inner city reveals both the need for greater resources, and a reluctance to talk about it. The meals and snacks offered through these places are ultimately dependent upon donations; in exchange for food and other necessary services, both caregivers and consumers may feel compelled to remain silent on sensitive issues. The system may not be perfect, they reason, but it works.

I leave the Bissell, and head back towards the train station. One woman, a professional by the look of her, cuts a wide berth around me as I pass her on the street.

Alyzza Hopfe

The Poor & Phoneless

Many people with low incomes are living without what most of us would consider to be a necessary service - a telephone.

They are without phones largely because they owe money on their telephone bills. Usually the bill is outstanding due to an inability to pay long distance charges.

Because of the serious impacts of not having home telephones the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) and the National Anti-Poverty Organization have asked the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to order telephone companies to stop disconnecting basic local services for failure to pay long dis-

tance charges.

Pippa Lawson, PIAC counsel, says "Local and long distance service are two separate services. You can get them from different companies."

The poverty organizations argue that, when a customer makes a partial payment on a telephone bill, that money should be first applied to basic local services and then to optional and long distance services. This would prevent many people from losing their basic telephone service.

The CRTC has not yet reached a decision.

Telus rejects any restriction on their right to disconnect customers from local services even when the customer is paying enough to cover that portion of the bill. In fact the company has been known to fail to inform customers who are in arrears on their bills of their options, and even their legislative rights, regarding payment plans and deposits.

Without telephones at home most individuals must rely on public pay telephones. But these phones are disappearing.

They are being removed when they are not considered to be economical. One reason given for this is increasing cell phone use. Another reason for removal is increased maintenance costs due primarily to vandalism.

A number of consumer groups in Ontario hired EKOS Research to carry out two nation-wide surveys. The first was a telephone survey. The second was a target survey of persons with low incomes in selected locations.

The studies indicated that public pay phones are considered a public service by almost all respondents. 49% of Canadians use pay phones occasionally. 88% of people with low incomes use these phones. Of the 88%, 22% reported daily use.

Charlie Fleet, Media Relations Manager at Telus, denies that there is any systematic removal of public pay telephones. He goes on to say that some street booths are being removed or relocated indoors. He adds that others are being removed because they are not economical. He refused to say which Edmonton communities are being hardest hit by this practice.

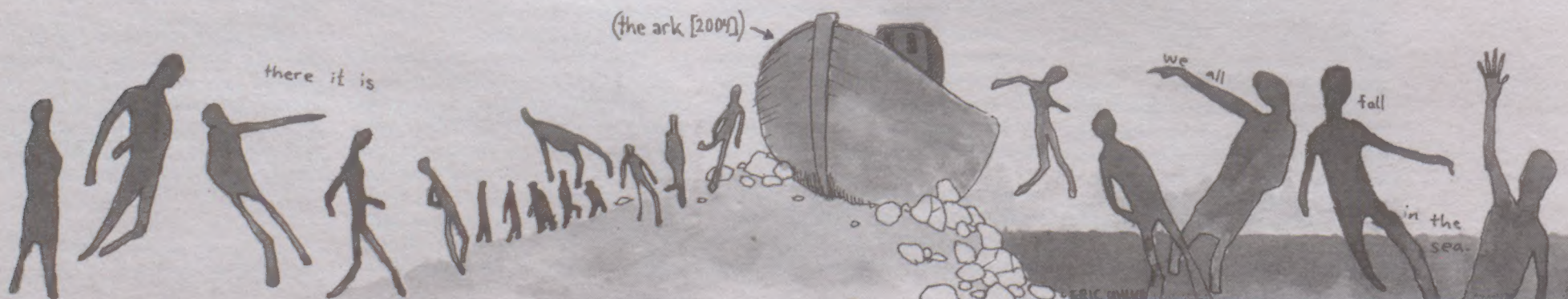
The Telus rate of annual reduction of pay telephones is 7 times the national average.

- Mary Bell

SCUTTLEBUTT S

SCUTTLEBUTT: blab, gossip, noise, rumor, talk, tattle, whisper

ROGET'S THESAURUS



SCUTTLEBUTT

S SCUTTLEBUTT

A drinking fountain on a ship; A cask on a ship used to hold the day's supply of drinking water.

THE AMERICAN
HERITAGE DICTIONARY



Are We Healthier Than Our Parents?

It is a risky proposition to make assumptions about a person's physical, mental, and social health from their appearance. However, in an image-conscious culture, such assumptions impact our lives and the lives of others every day. There is so much that we can't see through appearances alone. People who are the picture of health could be HIV positive. Professional dancers and Olympic gymnasts have been known to become anorexic. Numerous bodybuilders and cross-country ski champions test positive for performance-enhancing (and life-endangering) drugs. Someone in your office receives methadone on an ongoing basis to treat a heroin addiction. The overweight person in the grocery line-up is a lifeguard and swimming instructor with healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels. The visually impaired fellow on the bus is an avid downhill skier. The gorgeous and talented movie star returns to drug rehab again and again.

It is tempting and easy to make assumptions about the worthiness or value of a person in relation to the level of health or ability we perceive. "Health" as an idea is a value-laden construct, and its impact in our society is indisputable. The state of an individual's health is a very personal experience; however, it is difficult to extricate that per-

sonal experience from the social context. Layers of meaning have been attributed to many health conditions, which are then projected directly to the people with these health conditions. For example, sexually transmitted diseases can provoke embarrassment; by association, having an STD must be embarrassing. Addictions are associated with a lack of control; therefore, people with addictions are perceived as being out-of-control.

In a perfection-focused society, the state of our health has become yet another way to measure who measures up and who doesn't. When we take into account the definition of health as articulated by the World Health Organization since 1948 ("Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"), we see that social and mental well-being are considered as important as physical well-being in the definition. This is not currently reflected in our society. If so many individuals are now focused on their personal health, are we as a whole healthier?

The initial question Warren posed to me was: "Are we healthier than our parents?" From my laypersons' viewpoint, advances in medical science, shifting attitudes toward

lifestyle practices such as smoking, and the growing demand for organic food, to name a few, have helped us to be healthier than our parents. Addictions to fast food and vehicle-centred, sedentary lifestyles aside, people in general are healthier, I'd say. Well maybe physically, but mentally and socially, I think we're ailing. Aboriginal populations, people in poverty, homeless people, and people all over the rest of the world, eg: AIDS victims in Africa are barely surviving, or at best still struggling to sustain a minimal quality of life. How can we say we're healthier than our parents when so many are excluded from an equivalent overall well-being? On the whole, I'm not convinced that we actually are any healthier.

In our body-conscious society, there seems to be a focus upon health as a physical state of near-perfection, as an ideal to strive toward. When this is the prevailing viewpoint, it tends to discount or devalue those who have not achieved the ideal healthful state. There are those who are held up as healthy, and then there is everyone else—falling behind, not-quite-there-yet, or outright unhealthy, ill, diseased.

Some states of "un-health" seem to be much less acceptable or respectable. The street population is replete with such characters. Many consider people with addictions or many forms of mental illness disgraceful and pathetic. Why is it so shocking to be "crazy" or "a drunk"? We all know of celebrities with drinking problems, yet somehow they still enjoy the adulation of fans. How is it that the people on skid row get so little respect, much less the support they need?

When I'm unwell, I find that I'm more likely to rely on another person, to gratefully accept their kindness. When I'm back in good health, I feel a need to reassert my independence, to quickly resume my activities, so that I won't be considered lazy or weak, or (heaven forbid) a burden. But would it be so shameful for me to admit that I may need kindness and support, even when I'm well? It just may be that people who are physically or mentally unhealthy have much to teach the rest of us about social health, about accepting the generosity and support of others when needed.

If we as individuals have such a negative attitude toward seeking or accepting help from friends, neighbours, and family, how is this reflected in our attitudes toward those who seek and accept help from institutions such as the healthcare or social welfare systems? How have we become so allergic to needing each other? How did independence and isolation become preferable to interdependence and relationship?

Those who are deserving of assistance (according to society's standards) are fine. It seems that most are happy to support institutions that provide for sick children or people hurt in accidents—that sort of thing. What if the person hurt in the accident was driving irresponsibly, and crashed? Do they still deserve care? What if someone needing support has made a bad choice: does this person still deserve treatment? At what

point do people no longer deserve assistance?

As long as there is someone else to do that kind of dirty work, someone other than your everyday citizen, then usually people still don't object to some sort of provision of support. That's why Bissell Centre and all of the other social agencies in the city do "such good work", as I hear all the time. It is "such good work" because then most of the people in this city don't really have to worry about what is happening to the most vulnerable in our community. There are "professionals" and "experts" to deal with these problematic people.

Encountering people who are ill can provoke a good deal of discomfort in many of us. It is difficult to face reminders of our own mortality, our own inevitable progression toward a weakened physical and mental state, and eventually, death. It seems to me that on a collective level, we are just as uncomfortable with those people who remind us not only of our own frailty, but of the frailty of our society. It is difficult to see people on the street, without homes. It is challenging to encounter someone in desperate and miserable circumstances, especially someone who is loud or scruffy or smelly. When we notice the gaps in our social safety net, it can be frustrating, even frightening. The picture of our compassionate society reveals itself to be pathetically incomplete.

When our health or the health of our loved ones is threatened, the experience often serves as a re-focussing point. We are shaken out of our complacency into a new awareness. We have a chance to re-evaluate our perspective, to make changes in our lives as we learn from this new awareness. We have an opportunity to re-align our values and our un-socially-healthy practices. Here is an opportunity for all of us, to encounter each other as people worthy of attention, and to ask for and provide help when needed. A new awareness is called for, to help us to re-focus on the importance of every person, no matter how unwell or undeserving.

In our community, those who are most vulnerable, such as the street people who provoke such strong negative reactions to their particular forms of un-health, are among us to call us into action. Instead of dismissing their needs and attempting to send them back to where they won't be a bother and won't be noticed, we could recognize them as symptoms of an unwell society, and attend to the underlying illness of our culture, instead of continuing to treat them as ugly, annoying symptoms to be bandaged yet again.

True healing comes from treating the cause of a disease, not just the presenting symptom. True health, for individuals and for whole communities, comes from attending to the physical, mental, and social dimensions of our well-being, and recognizing that all members of society must be well for the society itself to be well.

- Kathryn Rambow

LEBBUTT



Homeless Angel

What brings about well-being? Is it a function of the physical, mental or spiritual aspects of ourselves? Does well-being stop at my doorway or is it inclusive of some people in our society, of all people in our society? Judy Graves, an inner city worker/activist, provided some interesting insights in a recent CBC Radio interview. These insights were based upon her observations of the everyday experiences of the homeless, the unemployed, the unemployable of our cities.

As Ms Graves, also the subject of a recent documentary entitled *Homeless Angel*, points out in some detail, the psychology of

those who are without wealth in our society is destructive to the affected human beings and to our collective humanity. On the street, as street dwellers well know, time is truncated. There is no past and no future. Humanism is reduced to a feral psychosis for the protection of the body at the expense of higher attributes. On the street, there is nothing but trying to counter the imminent threat to the security of the person. "How will I get enough to eat?" "Where will I sleep tonight?" "When can I get my next fix?" "What can I do so I won't be hurt again!" These questions foreclose any and all considerations of a human future beyond the moment and reduce most higher valuations

to immediate animalistic responses. Ms Graves contends that this foreclosure is at the peril of us all.

A current extreme example of the lack of the consideration of the well-being of people and of society is in the United States. There, the decades long rush to incarcerate criminals, rather than to engage them as fellow human beings with profound needs and ensuing behaviours, has produced a class of persons who are outcast from that society. Many States have laws that prohibit ex-cons from getting a driver's license, from voting, from getting welfare or any help at all from government. Moreover, programs to help integrate ex-cons into society have been gutted on a federal and state level. This, combined with the release of 90,000 prisoners this year who have completed their sentences, means that there are large numbers of people in the USA who will have absolutely no choice but to become criminals again. They will have no other recourse.

There is an ancient Chinese text that, despite being over 5000 years old, remains relevant today in any discussion of well-being. The I Ching, or Book of Changes, says that well-being entails a movement or a motion, a nourishing, from the outside to the inside of the body, and from the inside to the outside. Well-being is brought about by this nourishing which has two aspects, the nourishing of ourselves and the nourishing of others in society. To nourish ourselves, of course, it is with food, however there is a secondary meaning. It is in regard to what we determine to be important to us, what we 'feed' our own minds or psyche or soul. And what we feed in ourselves grows, with corresponding results in our lives. "If we wish to know if anyone is superior or not, we need only observe what part of his being he regards as especially important ... We must not injure important parts for the sake of the unimportant, nor must we injure the superior parts for the sake of the inferior. He who cultivates the inferior parts of his nature is an inferior man. He who cultivates the superior parts of his nature is a superior man." (I Ching, Cary Baynes translation, Princeton University press, 1997, p. 108) Despite the typically circumspect and subjective Chinese style of writing, these concepts are applicable today. They apply to what is lacking in the corporate hierarchical structures that pervade our society, structures which induce a conformity of values based upon power and the accumulation of wealth rather than ethics. These concepts form an individually designed, self-regulating, self-reliant, self-improvement plan. As such, this plan is anarchistic and anathema to a capitalist society. And to consider the movement from within outwards, to produce well-being in our society, that is brought about by the nourishment and care of others in a physical but also in a higher sense, through our words and our actions.

Because our current capitalist political/economic system does not provide properly for the needs of all people in our society does not mean that there is some-

Shall we, as a society, treat our most needy as animals treat their deficient ones? They let them die. Or shall we step in, to nourish them with genuine human kindness and respect that is reflected through our words and deeds for the benefit of us all?

thing wrong with some people. There are members of our society who have needs that are simply greater than others. As Ms Graves points out, genuine kindness and respect that is reflected in our words and actions is all that is necessary to make the world a better place. It is not a difficult thing to do and the results are significantly positive for those directly and indirectly involved. This is not entirely subjective. Empirical data indicate a reduction in crime to persons and property, and a decrease in health care costs to society, through the work of people like Judy Graves.

We have only to observe that there are people in our society who have been severely injured in spirit, body and mind. They keep being injured and injured and never have time to heal. They cannot plan for the future, they can only react to the present. Shall we, as a society, treat our most needy as animals treat their deficient ones? They let them die. Or shall we step in, to nourish them with genuine human kindness and respect that is reflected through our words and deeds for the benefit of us all?

SCUTTLEBUTT

Like the office watercooler, the shipboard water barrel—the **scuttlebutt**—was a social meeting place and the center of shipboard gossip and rumor. So today, the latest **scuttlebutt** is figuratively "the latest rumor." The literal sense is Standard, as is its figurative sense in all but Formal and Oratorical uses.

KENNETH G. WILSON

SCUTTLEBUTT

S SCUTTLEBUTT

SCUTTLEBUTT: To engage in or spread gossip: blab, gossip, noise, rumor, talk, tattle, whisper.

ROGET'S THESAURUS



Our Voice vendors are now equipped with stylish *Our Voice* T-shirts.

Dress to impress with Our Voice.



Prevention of Homelessness

What's your take on the prevention of homelessness and the need for affordable housing?

Bill: If people are given respect, that fosters a sense of pride. Then with both, a homeless person can become a valuable asset to the community at large.

Betty: I have been working with groups on this serious problem for about ten years. There is no need for people to die out on the street. It has taken too long to address the problem. Hearing far too often, he or she is a bum. Too many people have that attitude.

Not only citizens of Edmonton but all across North America, have this mindset that homeless people want to lead that lifestyle. That is a totally outrageous statement. Nobody in their right mind wants to grow up to live on the streets. Have you heard anyone say, "I want to be homeless when I grow up"? I doubt it.

This winter, the firehall on 96 Street was used for an emergency shelter because the powers that be said, "Churchill LRT was not suitable because of lack of privacy." The firehall was a big fiasco. Clients were subject to overhead doors opening and closing when firemen called for duty, sirens wailing and lots of banter between firemen and sleeping people. They were on the move again, this time to a building just north of Bissell Centre. Just after it opened, a homeless person showed up under the influence with skin turning blue. He passed away during the night. Will there be an inquiry into this death? Will anyone take responsibility? Were supervision people knowledgeable about street people? I doubt it!!

The upstanding citizens that live in the area around Knox United Church started a petition. The purpose was to block the church for using their basement as a shelter. They even went so far as to go to court to block this program. The church won. The objectors appealed but the church won the appeal.

Now I know that there were a lot of fires in the city that left people homeless and jobless so they received a lot of press. The point I am trying to get across is that the uproar over the objection to the shelter got a lot of press in the local newspapers. When the church finally won the legal battle, a brief note was buried deep in the back pages. Same old problem, that out of sight, out of mind mentality.

All three levels of government are going to the polls in a year or so. Make affordable housing, health and education on your most-important issue list. Write or phone your mayor, councillor, M.L.A. and M.P.

Get out to meetings concerning these issues. Educate and enlighten yourself on how to alleviate these problems. Then, let your conscience lead the way at the BALLOT BOX.

- Kevin Fox

Would you like to tell your story to Edmonton?

Are there things that happened to you that you think negatively affect others as well?

Should other people know what's going on?

Send your story to

wbjarnason@bissellcentre.org

or come see the

Our Voice

editor at the

Bissell Centre,

10527 - 96th

Street.

Let your voice be heard!

SUBVERSES

BAG PERSON

I saw the moon through the snow
tonight.
It rained down cold, the snow,
In tiny crystal clusters.

One billion moons swept my car as I
drove
And covered the road so thick
That the black ground was soft and soft
white.

A solitary truck swirled nebulae
About me that
Followed for a mile.

In the noisy silence of my car
I wondered about an old man that I had
seen
Who wore broken glasses and
Carried a bag and a box and a stick;
And needed new boots to wear in the
cold winter night
So he could walk with the
moon at his feet.

- JR Robertson

RUSHING IN SLOW MOTION

A small man gets up for his early morning walk
in slow motion.
Mighty man-made machines push/rush by in slushy
slow motion
impeded by a traffic light, dimmed light and those not rushing
in slow motion.

The near mighty man begins to feel like a marble
Rolling/rushing in slow motion.
He arrives at the Lutheran Church breakfast club with others
Rushing in slow motion.
With worn-out warm hands he says grace (for fine free food)
in slow motion.

After the early meal, he avoids two men in a heated talk.
"Anyone can talk," he thinks, and silently,
swiftly continues his walk
On the way to the Bissell Centre, he hears
kids who seem to squawk.

Like little lion cubs looking for their parents at the crosswalk.
Sometimes such sights concern teachers for those who stalk
The young ones who enter their classroom to learn from the
Black/Green board with chalk.
Dedicated, underpaid, these professionals are expected to
educate the under-fed in bulk!

*The marble-like man makes his way onwards to city centre
in slow motion.*

He sees small sisters, big sisters smoking
custom-made cigarettes in slow motion.
And quickly snuff them out, then back to work in slow motion.
The big boss busily awaits them to computerize or customize
his wares in slow motion.

Salivating at the thought of profit from an over-taxed,
underfed population.
And, if perchance, they forgot to pay them,
might they go to prison?
Or, if the grandma dame neglects her snowed-in sidewalk, will
they take her pension?

Sometimes it is entertaining to see reality rushing
in slow motion.
Our over-burdened policemen deserve high praise for
the de-escalation.
For most of the serious stabs and
other criminal commotion.
Our Canadian contingent overseas might be small but I am
thankful for their contribution.

Am a brother to a former P.P.C.L.I. and was a member of the
Royal Canadian Legion
So, if softly, some spiritual songs can be heard
at the Bissell Centre
in some entertaining situation.
Perhaps, we can eat mad cows, skewered sows and continue
rushing in slow motion.

- Ernie W. Ballandine (Vendor #1044)

FOR MY LOVER

You glow soft in blue, my love.
Joy springs from your sweet smile and
touches me,
It lights a flame that moves through me,
Then burns deep.

With you, quenching an ancient fire,
I am transformed to primal man and
close upon you.
Reason fails as consummation takes my
intellect.

You enfold me as scented space,
Or an ocean of extensive delights.

Returning to origination, the boundaries
between us dissolve,
Sight reverts to pure light and the
Fusion reaction shudders completely
This one thing we have become.

-JR Robertson

SUBVERSES S

Intended or serving to
subvert, especially
intended to overthrow or
undermine an established
government:

"Sex and creativity are
often seen by dictators
as subversive activities"

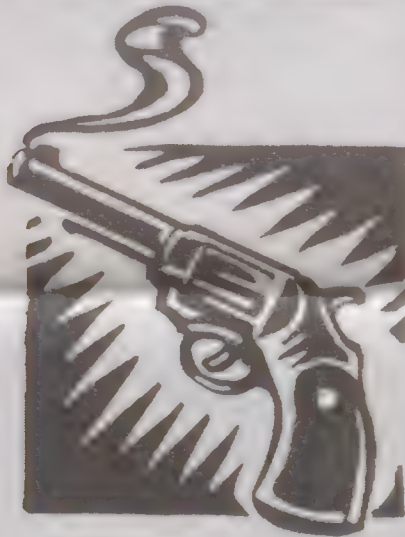
ERICA JONG

FIBRE, FACTS & FALLACIES

F FIBRE

Life is made too easy. Mankind's moral **fibre** is giving way under the softening influence of luxury

JOHAN HUIZINGA



One Shot Meal

Inexpensive meals that can be made in one pot or pan

Baked Layered Pasta

This dish has a big payoff for minimal effort. I usually make four or five extra dinners to freeze when I make this. Investing a few bucks in stackable aluminium containers is worth the convenience of having a lot of "emergency food" in your fridge that is not full of ingredients that no-one can pronounce.

Ingredients:

- 300g penne, rotini or any pasta
- One tin of roma/plum tomatoes
- Four cloves of garlic, minced
- Two onions, sliced thinly
- 10-15 mushrooms, sliced thinly
- one tablespoon of dried oregano (always use fresh herbs when available and add half near the end of the cooking process)
- 100g of good parmesan cheese, grated. Reggiano, padano or romano are preferable. Buying a few dollars worth of good parmesan, instead of something in a "shakeable container" makes a considerable difference in the overall quality of the meal.
- 500g of mozzarella

Directions:

In a high-sided pot, sauté onions, mushrooms and garlic in olive oil and butter

until they start to brown, then add the tomatoes and most of the oregano. Sauces can be cooked quickly to retain the colour and freshness of the ingredients; or can be simmered slowly, adding fresh ingredients and seasoning along the way, this produces a better depth of flavour, but costs some of the brightness of the sauce. Both methods are fine, just remember to taste what you're cooking while you're cooking it, and before you serve it to friends and family.

Boil pasta in salted water (no oil) and drain in a colander. Do not rinse in water! This only serves to smooth the surface that you want sauce to stick to. Mix the pasta into the sauce, using a ratio of just enough sauce to coat everything nicely. Stir in most of the parmesan and put half of the pasta into a coming ware dish. Top with just less than half of the grated mozzarella and fill to the top with pasta. Do the same for the other layer. If you have a baking dish with very high sides or if you just want an excuse to use more cheese, make three layers. Bake at 400 degrees until the cheese starts to bubble and lightly brown.

Presentation:

Sprinkle each serving liberally with parmesan and serve with a salad or roasted vegetables.

- Warren Bjarnason

Our Vice

Procrastination 3.1

For your loyal readership, we offer an avant garde piece of performance art. We call it: Procrastination: A Still-Life in Black and White.



@#\$%!!



@#\$%!!

@#\$%!!

On Vice

The vice named surrealism is the immoderate and impassioned use of the stupeficient image or rather of the uncontrolled provocation of the image for its own sake and for the element of unpredictable perturbation and of metamorphosis which it introduces into the domain of representation; for each image on each occasion forces you to revise the entire Universe.

- Louis Aragon

FIBRE, FACTS & FALLACIES

Patchworks to Rise Again



Inner-City Music Project in the Works

The first Patchworks CD came out in the spring of 2003 and since then people all over the city have been enjoying the music of musicians connected to Edmonton's inner-city. The Patchworks project was initiated with funding from Action for Healthy Communities that led to the creation of a master recording. Bissell Centre then pitched in with money for duplicate pressings of that master. To date, approximately 1,500 copies of the first Patchworks CD have been sold through the Our Voice vendor network.

The Patchworks project has been a good fit for Bissell Centre's operations, being vertically integrated from the process of introducing musicians through Bissell's coffeehouse (held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month), applying the musical, technical and administrative skills of project participants connected to Bissell and finally, by enhancing the earning potential of Our Voice vendors through the addition of another high quality item to the Our Voice product catalogue.

Our Voice would like to invite any musician with a significant connection to Edmonton's inner-city to learn more about the Patchworks project. Call Earl (423-2285 ext. 144) or Ron (423-2285 ext. 139) at Bissell Centre. The project aims to facilitate the recording of original, unpublished material from inner-city musicians. The Bissell Centre coffeehouse is another venue for the showcasing of this talent and the coffeehouse will be an aid to the Patchworks project organizers. When musicians interested in being involved with the project "audition" at the coffeehouse, the organizers will have a chance to make observations on the suitability of their performance for inclusion on the Patchworks CD. Aside from a connection to the inner-city, the



patchworks
music from the inner city

other criteria that the organizers will be using include the quality of the composition and its performance, the impact the material will have on the other selections (i.e. the diversity of the set as a whole), and the feasibility of actually working with the artist.

The next Bissell coffeehouse is on Tuesday, January 20th. It will be necessary to call and get your name on the list as there has already been encouraging interest shown by musicians who want to participate in the recording of the next Patchworks CD. The first one has been well received and it is anticipated that the next one will be even more so.

There is an opportunity for people to help out with the project even without performing. The Bissell Centre coffeehouse and the Patchworks project could really use some

resources to properly pull together the next recording. If anybody is interested in donating space that could be used for a studio (approx. 500 sq. ft.) for about three months, the project could then actually say that it has a recording space (quite important). Music equipment is also an important need as many inner-city musicians do not have their own instruments. Of particular importance to Patchworks are a drum kit, keyboard and any used recording equipment (microphone, speakers, etc.). Finally, as Patchworks takes very seriously its role in respecting the artists from whom the music is derived, we need the services of a legal advisor specializing in the entertainment field. If you're able to help out with any of these please call Earl at 423-2285 ext. 144.

Sweep your string,
So we may sing,
Elated, optative,
Our several voices
Interblending,
Playfully contending,
Not interfering
But co-inhering,
For all within
The cincture of the
sound
Is holy ground,
Where all are Brothers,
None faceless Others.
Let mortals beware
Of words, for
With words we lie,
Can say peace
When we mean war,
Foul thought speak fair
And promise falsely,
But song is true:
Let music for peace
Be the paradigm,
For peace means to
change
At the right time,
As the World-Clock,
Goes Tick and Tock.
So may the story
Of our human city
Presently move
Like music, when
Begotten notes
New notes beget,
Making the flowing
Of time a growing,
Till what it could be,
At last it is,
Where even sadness
Is a form of gladness,
Where Fate is Freedom,
Grace and Surprise.

-W. H. Auden (1907-73)

FANTASTICAL

F

Nothing can be more delicate without being **fantastical**, nothing more firm and based in nature and sentiment, than the courtship and mutual carriage of the sexes.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

VENDOR REPUBLIC

THE FOX'S DEN

R REPUBLIC

I despair of the Republic!
Such dreariness, such
whining sorrow women,
such utter absence of the
amenities, such crass food,
crass manners, crass
landscape!... What a horror
it is for a whole nation to be
developing without the
sense of beauty & eating
bananas for breakfast.

EDITH WHARTON



The Busker's Other Ball

The main objective of this event is to promote buskers and give them a forum. It also gives the audience an independent, musical alternative - both sides win.

The profits will go to Parkland Institute and Orion's Belt hopes to pay an honorarium to the buskers. Orion's Belt is a loose organization of musicians, artists and activists who volunteer their time to run projects such as the Busker's Other Ball and Equinox Celebrations of Peace, Love and Understanding.

Their fifteen volunteers are a mix of new and old people. They are made up of students, artists and labour professionals. They have people who actually make a living from busking.

Entertainment will be performed by solos, duos and full bands, including:

Doug Hill, Michael Payant, Bill Carley
The McGowan Brothers, Jay Gilday
Bill and Gerrard MacKinnon, Glenn Eilers
Sandy McCubbin

The line up could be adjusted slightly.
The price of admission for the fabulous
show is a mere \$5.00 and CHANGE.

Incredible meals can be had for \$7.00 and beverages and snacks will also be available.

Come out for an enjoyable evening. Orion's Belt will provide entertainment and will also point you toward Parkland Institute, Earth General Store and CJSR for information that will make a difference in our community. Bill Carley says, "At the end of day, if we have entertained the people, we have done our job". It is a very strong lineup, some of them you'll meet for the first time. Great sound is provided by Mike Tulley of M.K.T. Systems. MARCH 19TH, QUEEN ALEXANDER HALL - 10425 UNIVERSITY AVENUE. Web Site - <http://buskersball.twysted.net>

On March 12th, 11p.m., Alter-States, CJSR 88.5 FM, the buskers will be performing live. Give yourself a preview of assorted styles if you are still awake at that time. See you on March 19th.

- Kevin Fox

"Our youth of
today are the
investment and
leaders of
tomorrow". How
can that be
achieved when
there is a severe
lack of
funding of health,
education and
affordable, safe
housing?

Student Food Banks

The need for student food banks is because students are facing tougher times, lack of affordable housing and higher tuitions.

Loans have not been adjusted for inflationary costs since the early nineties. Students are not included in the poverty line. The Student Association runs their own food bank. As of January, 20 people have used the facilities. They are only allowed one visit per semester. They are supplied with non-perishable products, nothing fresh and only personal hygiene stuff, nothing for house cleaning. This food bank has been in operation for two years.

The Student Association has been working side by side with the college for the purpose of aiding students with affordable accommodations. Right now, there are only a couple of thousand students from outside the city and province. Student loans only include \$300.00 for rent. A large portion of loans have to cover the other costs for living. This does not take in to consideration students from the Edmonton area who are sharing accommodation with one or more other students.

Now, you may wonder why this is worth writing about. How many times have you heard? - "Our youth of today are the investment and leaders of tomorrow". How can that be achieved when there is a severe lack of funding of health, education and affordable, safe housing?

In 2002, while helping out the homeless and affordable safe housing survey, one of the worst comments was, "It doesn't affect me because I'm in rent geared to income housing". Living at home, or with parents paying for tuition, rent, food and clothing is the reality for some students. Where would they be without that safety net?

The above mentioned affects everyone because if you don't have a healthy and productive society, it affects everyone.

- Kevin Fox

On Fox
His berd as any
sowe or fox
was reed,
And therto
brood, as
though it were
a spade.
Upon the cop
right of his
nose he hade
A werthe, and
theron stood a
toft of herys
Reed as the
brustles of a
sowes erys.
His nosethirles
blake were and
wyde.

- Geoffrey Chaucer

when the bough breaks • eric uhlich

i wonder about
the well-being
of a society
outraged by a
breast on
teevee



but that sits
idly by as
wars rage
and famine
and poverty
exist all around.

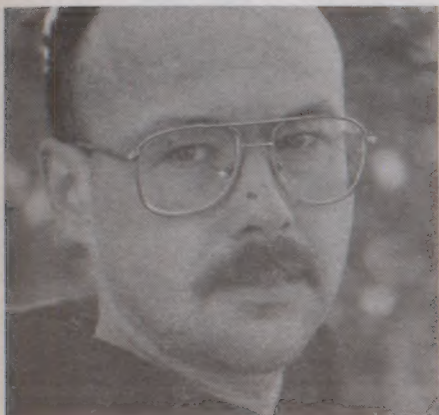


maybe
i should
be out there,
trying to
make a difference...



VENDOR REPUBLIC

In Memorium...



Sinner and Saint

Robert, I write this in tribute to your memory. Mysteriously you entered my life, and just as mysteriously you left it. My impression upon meeting you at Dixon Studios - a loud, uncouth, attention seeking street person. How could my friend Richard let you defile the atmosphere of an Artist's Studio? However, time passed, you won me over with your story telling, and amazingly powerful recital of "The Cremation of Sam McGee". You commented to Richard we've found a kindred spirit. At the studio, you'd play with Jamie, even taking him outside when you needed a smoke. You remarked, I'm not comfortable with kids, yet you two bonded.

It was a time of many possibilities, the 2001 games were coming in August. Richard opened a larger gallery, you lived in the back, to help operate it and promote your rocks and calcite, which were your passion. I'd see you periodically in the summer. Then November you entered my life in earnest. A call from Remand-addiction had re-emerged, controlling your life. Through homelessness, you came to live with me in December. There were many tough times, you desperately sought to quit drinking - there were successful days. As we grew closer, sharing our innermost thoughts, I accepted you for the man you were at each moment. This was hard for me, as I grew up in an alcoholic environment, and hated alcoholics.

I tried my way of helping you to keep sober. I'd either breach you on probation, or kick you out for the night. Winter nights were -20°C. The next morning you apologized with a smile. You were barred from shelters, and other places due to violent occurrences while drunk, so some nights you slept outside. People had warned me against having you intimately in my life. You admitted to violence, drinking, and gambling. Your family even cautioned me. My son

Jamie loved you. You were gentle, kind and firm with him. Role modeling for me how to communicate with you children. If I was stressed you'd look after Jamie, outings, making meals-granny's tomato soup. Which was milk, tomato soup, macaroni, and of course, grilled cheese sandwich. Today this remains Jamie's favourite meal.

I discovered that we shared the same passions: art, rocks, compassion for our fellow man-we both tried to make the world a better place, we watched documentaries, current affair shows. You showed a positive attitude. You had brilliant ideas, only your addictions kept you from fulfilling the potential everyone knew you possessed. Then one morning I awoke and life was altered forever. Robert, I found you dead only inches from me. Your face bore a look of contentment, and a half smile. Your body was warm, yet your forehead and lips were chilled. I watched in disbelief as EMS tried to revive you; stories of near death experiences you told raced through my brain. My heart knew, Robert you had embarked on a new and brighter journey. The coroner's report stated multiple drug toxicity. Robert you have touched my life; only done by one other person, Mary my grandmother. She died on your birthday in 1985. I was with her at the time too. I often wonder about this connection. Like her Robert, you accepted me for the total person I am. You loved unconditionally, nor were you ashamed of my disability. You often called me your wife, where other men I dated, would not acknowledge me as their girlfriend. You forgave me willingly for my well intentioned trespasses against you. At your memorial service, I learned of other lives, that your gentleness and acceptance had touched. Robert you strove to make a difference in the lives of those beset by addictions, poverty, loneliness and violence, the human suffering you knew all too well. Robert your life was a living example, an inspiration to me to open my heart, to the possibilities dormant in every person. I teach Jamie that every living creature is worthy of respect and to suspend judgment. Jamie was 3 when you died, he still talks about you. I explained that you live with God in the sky with the sun, moon, and stars. Each time Jamie sees a plane, he says there goes Robert. When I meet someone that knows you, it is a blessing to hear more stories about you. One day I hope to write a collection.

Robert Arthur Lacroix October 20, 1962 - February 28, 2003

- Roxanne Shular

Editor's Note: Robert was a regular at the Bissell Centre and many other inner-city agencies.



Veronica Our Good Mother

You would always see Veronica, busily catching buses, running errands, or grocery shopping in Bonnie Doon or on Whyte Avenue. Many of you knew her by her appearance, striking black hair, red lipstick, blue eyeshadow, long earrings, and always wearing red or blue acted with white or black. Or you knew her by her constant smile. She was a kind and gentle lady, who befriended and touched the hearts of all who met her. We'll miss our Good-Mother and her endless generosity. Veronica donated gifts every Christmas to the men and women in the Bissell Centre Drop-In, gifts for the children, and items for the Bissell Store and other charitable agencies. This year she asked us to take all of her warm coats to George Spady for those in need. Every year she canvassed for the Diabetes, Heart and Lung Association. Mother didn't have much money, but she always helped those in need. Mother would take from what little she had, and give to the Food Bank or the rest of her family. Veronica worked at the Commercial hotel for a number of years, befriended some of the Our Voice vendors, going for coffee, helping out the hotel residents by running their errands, buying them treats and gifts or visiting them in the hospital. She also took clothing and food to some of the homeless on Whyte Avenue. Veronica Catherine Saban, passed away on February 2, 2004 and she will be deeply missed by her family and all those whose hearts she touched in so many of her gentle and loving ways.

- Joanna Foster
(Past Bissell Centre Staff)

Editor's Note: Veronica built relationships with many Our Voice vendors and will be missed by those who knew her.

Do not go gentle into
that good night,
Old age should burn
and rave at
close of day;
Rage, rage against the
dying of the light.

Though wise men at
their end know
dark is right,
Because their words
had forked no
lightning they
Do not go gentle into
that good night.

Good men, the last
wave by, crying how
bright
Their frail deeds might
have danced
in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the
dying of the light.

Wild men who caught
and sang the sun in
flight,
And learn, too late,
they grieved it
on its way,
Do not go gentle into
that good night.

Grave men, near death,
who see with
blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze
like meteors
and be gay,
Rage, rage against the
dying of the light.

And you, my father,
there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now
with your fierce tears,
I pray.
Do not go gentle into
that good night.
Rage, rage against the
dying of the light.

-Dylan Thomas

REPUBLIC R

No republic is more real
than that of letters, and I am
the last in principles, as I am
the least in pretensions to
any dictatorship in it.

THOMAS JEFFERSON



S SOOTHSAYER

Soothsayer. Beware the Ides of March. Caesar. He is a dreamer. Let us leave him. Pass.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



PISCES (February 19th - March 20th)

The pursuit of prowess - be it oratorical, athletic or instrumental - can improve the day-to-day routine, even elevate it to a more fulfilling lifestyle. You can do this and this month is a good time to start. Of greatest importance in going after this fulfillment is to resist the temptation to be only human on the inside. Keep your eyes open to the light that surrounds you.

ARIES (March 21st - April 19th)

Waiting for an outside urging to remember the happiest days of your life might lead you to forget them. Is that what you want? Stop right here and trip back to the halcyon times when stuff was darn near perfect.



TAURUS (April 20th - May 20th)

Feeling a need for more wellness in your being? Think of Adam Smith's description of the human conscience as an invisible witness to your every thought and deed, for whom you have the utmost respect. You want to "make a good impression on this worthy bystander" - to use Christopher Hitchens' phrase. Now, remember that this invisible witness appreciates good, compassionate and honorable behaviour... and be well.



GEMINI (May 21st - June 20th)

While cutting this out and pasting it on your bathroom mirror (with apologies to those who don't have a bathroom or a mirror) won't necessarily lead the way to Nirvana, you might be compelled to come up with your own reasons why your well-being and that of others' is important. Reflecting on this should be scientifically proven to provide both physical, mental and emotional benefits exceeding those of brussels sprouts and irregular exercise. (N.b. There is a school in which you might learn that one way to work on the extinction of the illusion of suffering is to realize that things could always be worse; you could for example be the focus of torment and violations in a Hieronymus Bosch painting.)



CANCER (June 21st - July 22nd)

Cancer, there are some signs of the zodiac that lend themselves to the development of a stronger independence. Seeking fame for the fact that you share a likeness with a celebrity is not a particularly shining example of independence. Maybe it's because that, as a water sign, you "regard emotions as more real than any other aspect of life" and you're feeling perversely compelled by your emotional attachment to a certain celebrity. Stay home instead; you'll be happier.



LEO (July 23rd - August 22nd)

You may be prone to a rash or an infection if you over-extend yourself. To avoid embarrassing questions you need to pay attention to your energy levels. It probably wouldn't hurt your mental well-being to also nurture an ability to accept imperfection.

VIRGO (August 23rd - September 22nd)

"Stop your sobbing. It is time for you to laugh instead of crying." Ray Davies maybe wasn't thinking of the geo-political situation when he wrote that 40 years ago but Sandy figures you might apply it today. Conflict is a natural part of our human condition. Instead of resisting it try to welcome it as the anvil upon which we can forge a stronger social structure. Let all the voices be heard so that all the backs may bend to the task.



LIBRA (September 23rd - October 22nd)

You want well-being? Rather than heeding the explicit blaring crap of hate and hedonism, hunker down with cryptic, quiet warming messages of love. Let the deciphering process lead to a frisson and a smile, an enlightened laugh and a dance of delight.



SCORPIO (October 23rd - November 21st)

Self-indulgent musical allusions and lightweight frippery aside, Sandy's astrological prediction for you this month Scorpio, is that you'll begin a journey towards spiritual and emotional wellness; if only for the reason that winter's cold is waning. While you shouldn't pack up your toque and gloves just yet, the longer days will cast a warming light on all that you have to be thankful for.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22nd - December 21st)

You can't be a passenger in your own life, particularly when you're faced with a number of rivers to cross. You are valuable. Take the time and put out whatever it takes to give yourself a tune-up. Then slide into the driver's seat and put yourself through your paces.



CAPRICORN (December 22nd - January 19th)

It's hard to see the future through the cruel mist from a wicked rain but there's a blurry image in there somewhere of long dark hair plastered to a pretty face; white shirt clinging onto smooth white skin. Her own vision followed a ribbon of steel to Reva's house where she pushed through a crowd of angels with dirty faces while looking for the saint behind the glass. Stepping off the blood-stained whiskey trail, she sat down to rest beside Kiko and the lavender moon, then felt a hand shake her shoulder and heard "wake up Dolores". Arising from a dream in blue her own words were "that train don't stop here". She'll laugh in relief and say he's just a man. Peace... to us all.



AQUARIUS (January 20th - February 18th)

If you're intent on fostering a truly good vibe this month, don't wait to be wooed into the conservative-infested plutocracy. Some of those folks regard the corruption of humanity as inevitable as Armageddon, and what's fun about that? Exercise your democratic right; cast your vote and elect yourself to ranks of the truly alive. Remember what Gran said - "If you're healthy, you're wealthy."

Summer Programs at Moonlight Bay Centre

What are YOU doing with your summer?

*"This summer's staff was one of the best that I've ever been part of."
(Summer 2003 staff)*

- ▶ A supportive, fun, and tight-knit team environment on Lake Wabamun
- ▶ A chance to further develop your skills and knowledge
- ▶ A meaningful opportunity to work in a key inner-city agency (Bissell Centre)
- ▶ A comprehensive week-long training session
- ▶ Access to camp recreation facilities and equipment
- ▶ Room and board in a comfortable cabin situated in a natural setting

"I learned so much..." (Summer 2003 staff)

Seeking promising students (18 years+) and non-students for a range of positions, including program staff, waterfront staff, assistant manager, caretakers, and cooks. Not yet 18? Check out the Moonlight Bay Volunteer Leadership Program!

*"It has been an honor and a pleasure to work at Moonlight Bay this summer."
(Summer 2003 staff)*

For more information, see postings at U of A, GMCC, and Earth's General Store, or contact Kathryn Rambow (Manager of Moonlight Bay Centre) at krambow@bissellcentre.org

Performers Wanted!

Family Entertainment Night (Coffee House)

Open Stage! Live Music!
Light Supper! Poetry Reading!

DOOR PRIZES!!

Tuesday, March 16th

Supper 6 PM
Music at 7 PM

Bissell Centre

10527 - 96 St.
Contact: Earl @ 423-2285 ext. 144

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

For the Inner City

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- ▶ Life Management Skills Training
- ▶ Career Counseling
- ▶ Résumé & Cover Letter Preparation
- ▶ Job Interview Skills
- ▶ Internet Training
- ▶ H2S Training (limited funding available)
- ▶ WHMIS/Standard First Aid Training

All services offered at no cost!

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"Pay the worker –
NOT the broker"

Minimum hourly rate - \$8.00
Minimum 4 hours per day

Workers available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day
Bookings taken within work hours
Mon-Thurs: 7am-2pm
Fri: 7am-noon

Need someone to help with...

- ▶ Yard Work/Snow Removal
- ▶ Loading/Unloading
- ▶ Decorating – internal/external
- ▶ Cleaning – domestic/industrial
- ▶ Manufacturing
- ▶ General Labour

All services offered at no cost!

BISSELL CENTRE

Telephone: 424-4385

Or

Casual Labour program for women at
Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton

Telephone: 421-1175 ext 22
Mon-Fri 7pm-3pm



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AUDIENCE AWARD FOR WORLD CINEMA
SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

A Special Premiere Screening
in support of Edmonton's Our Voice Magazine.

Wed. March 17, 2004 - 7:00pm

Tickets: \$9 adults / \$7 students-youth / \$6 kids-seniors



"Essential!"

Cameron Bailey, NOW Magazine



**"Highly-effective,
wonderfully entertaining..."**

Katherine Mink, Vancouver Sun

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The Corporation @ the Garneau Theatre

8712 - 109 Street - Infoline: 433-0728

Sponsored by: The Community Networks Group (474-6058 / 995-6819)

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THE CORPORATION

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A Feature documentary by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott & Joel Bakan.

Wed, March 17, 2004 - 7:00 p.m. @The Garneau Theatre
8712 - 109 Street > Infoline: 433-0728 (or) 474-6859 / 995-6819

Tickets: \$9 adults / \$7 students-youth / \$6 kids-seniors

A special premiere screening in support of Edmonton's **Our Voice** Magazine.

Sponsored by: The Community Networks Group (474-6058 / 995-6819)

THE CORPORATION engages us in a darkly amusing account of the institution's birth as a legal "person" whose prime directive is to produce ever-increasing profit for its shareholders regardless of the cost to anyone, or anything else. This pathological nature wasn't always written in stone. 150 years ago a corporation was merely an organized way of doing business. Today it is a global power.

The Corporation features interviews with CEO's and top-level executives representing a wide range of industries, including: oil (Shell), pharmaceuticals (Pfizer), computers (IBM), tires (Goodyear), carpets (Interface), public relations (Burson Marsteller), branding (Landor), and advertising (Initiative) as well as critical thinkers such as: Noam Chomsky, Peter Drucker, Milton Friedman, Naomi Klein, Mark Kingwell, Vandana Shiva, and muckraking filmmaker Michael Moore.

To learn more about the film, please visit:
www.thecorporation.com

Replacements Available for Our Voice 2004 Calendar

Please note that the months of June, November & December of the *Our Voice Urban Exposure* Calendar contain printing errors.

Replacement calendars are now available from *Our Voice*.

For more information, please contact Ron at:
423-2285 Ext. 139.

We apologize for the inconvenience.